UNITED
NATIONS

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General Assembly Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

A/47/232
S/24025
28 May 1992
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Forty-seventh session
Items 11, 21, 31, 47, 75, 87, 94
and 127 of the preliminary list*
REPORT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL
COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS
AND THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN
STATES
REVITALIZATION OF THE WORK OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
RESTRUCTURING AND REVITALIZATION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS IN THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL
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COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE WHOLE
QUESTION OF PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS
IN ALL THEIR ASPECTS
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE FINANCING
OF DEVELOPMENT
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY ASPECTS
OF THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS
PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-seventh year

Letter dated 26 May 1992 from the representatives of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions from our Governments, we have the honour to address you, in the context of the statement made at the meeting of the Security Council held at the level of Heads of State and Government on 31 January 1992, in order to contribute to the search for ways of strengthening the capacity of the United Nations for preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping.

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In this connection, and as the main focus of any thinking on this matter, we believe that it is essential to promote the optimal utilization of the existing machinery while scrupulously respecting the principles of the Charter and the allocation of responsibilities among the various organs established therein. We also believe it is essential to give special priority to improving the Organization's capacity both in the area of international peace and security and in that of economic and social development and international cooperation. All this within a framework in which the decision-making process should become increasingly democratic, balanced and effective.

We express our readiness to take an active and constructive part in the consideration by the General Assembly of the recommendations to be submitted by the Secretary-General on ways of strengthening and making more efficient the capacity of the United Nations for preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping, in accordance with the invitation extended to him at the afore-mentioned meeting of the Security Council.

In the afore-mentioned context, we submit our views on the subject in an annex to this letter, and we should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under items 11, 21, 31, 47, 75, 87, 94 and 127 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

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Ambassador
Permanent Representative
of Argentina to the
United Nations

(Signed) Barbara CANEDO
Minister Counsellor
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
Permanent Mission of Bolivia
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(Signed) Ronaldo M. SARDENBERG
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Permanent Mission of Chile
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(Signed) Alfredo REY CORDOBA
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Central America

(Signed) Lucille MATHURIN MAIR
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
of Jamaica to the
United Nations Representing
CARICOM

(Signed) Jorge MONTAÑO
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Permanent Representative
of Mexico to the
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Ambassador
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United Nations

(Signed) Hugo SAGUIER CABALLERO
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(Signed) Diego ARRIA
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of Venezuela to the
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ANNEX

Guidelines for strengthening the capacity of the United Nations in the area of preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping

1. In view of the new challenges facing the international community, we resolutely support strengthening the capacity of the United Nations to prevent, anticipate and avert the occurrence or aggravation of situations that may threaten international peace and security. Such a strengthening must consider that capacity in terms of the functions and responsibilities of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Secretariat. To this end, the characteristics of each of these organs and their respective competencies under the Charter shall be taken into account so as to enhance the effectiveness and timeliness of the various stages of any given preventive diplomacy or peacemaking initiative.

2. Strengthening the capacity of the United Nations in the areas of preventive diplomacy, peace-keeping and peacemaking must have as their premise compliance with the norms of international law and strict adherence to the purposes and principles of the Charter. In particular, such efforts must be based on respect for the principles of sovereignty, non-intervention, sovereign equality, the territorial integrity of States and the self-determination of peoples.

3. The concepts of preventive diplomacy and peacemaking cover a broad range of activities, from information-gathering to fact-finding missions, as provided for in General Assembly resolution 46/59 of 9 December 1991, as well as the use of good offices, mediation, conciliation and other diplomatic efforts by the Secretary-General, as called for in General Assembly resolution 46/48 of 9 December 1991.

4. With regard to information-gathering, a task which falls chiefly to the Secretariat, the analytical capacity of that organ should be strengthened. The United Nations must use transparent mechanisms for the collection and dissemination of information. In time, it may be useful to promote a broader dialogue between the Secretary-General and the Governments of Member States. All this would allow the Secretariat to produce impartial evaluations, conclusions and recommendations regarding specific situations that might threaten international peace and security.

5. International peace and security will be genuinely guaranteed to the extent that the underlying causes of conflicts are eliminated. In reaffirming the importance of economic and social development as one of the basic premises underlying the strengthening of international peace and security, we believe that, along with violations of the Charter and other norms of international law, the disparity in wealth between nations, which leads to crises caused by a whole series of unmet needs, may be an important source of instability in the post-cold-war world.

6. In view of the foregoing, the concept of security needs to be expanded by acknowledging that numerous sources of economic and social instability exist and that overcoming them will help to strengthen international peace and security. Accordingly, these problems must be dealt with as a matter of priority and in a prevention-oriented manner by all States Members of the United Nations through the competent organs, namely the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the specialized agencies and programmes, thereby enhancing the effectiveness and content of United Nations activities in the fields of economic and social development and international cooperation.

7. We note with interest the statements of the Secretary-General to the effect that in order to achieve genuine and lasting peace, peace-keeping operations must be followed by "peace-building" operations. On that basis, and extending to this area the concept of prevention, we believe that the time has come for the United Nations to undertake the task of "preventive peace-building" in order to prevent the outbreak of crises for economic and social reasons.

8. To that end, the United Nations should take concrete action. In this respect, we are paying very close attention to the proposal of the Economic and Social Council to hold a world summit for social development, an initiative which was put forward during the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly, and whose merits and basic principles were confirmed at the summit meeting of the Security Council held on 31 January 1992. Similarly, among other measures, priority attention should be paid to coordinating the work of the United Nations with the international financial bodies, holding an international conference on financing for development, and taking advantage of the economic results of the disappearance of the military confrontation between East and West for the purposes of economic and social development at the global level.

9. It is essential to strengthen the decision-making mechanisms and ensure that, within the framework of the powers conferred on it by the Charter, the General Assembly debates and decides on items of global interest, including the so-called "new items". The strength and viability of the Organization are closely linked with the participation of Member States in decision making and their adequate representation in the various specialized bodies and agencies. The analysis of the organizational and working methods of the General Assembly must be continued in greater depth, and those methods must be brought in line with current needs and requirements.

10. The General Assembly, like the Security Council and the Secretary-General, should play an important role in the prevention of conflict situations, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to it under the Charter. As a universal forum, its capacity to consider and take preventive action must be strengthened. To that end it is essential, in line with the spirit of Articles 10, 11, 34, 35 and 99 of the Charter, to promote its utilization by Member States in order to bring the influence of the international community to bear in avoiding or containing situations which are liable to disrupt international peace and security.

11. We welcome the tendency to recognize the growing importance of the political aspect of the Secretary-General's functions and of the diplomatic role he can play to promote the maintenance of international peace and security, in accordance with the Charter and at the request of the parties concerned. In this spirit, we await with interest the opportunity to consider the Secretary-General's recommendations on ways of making fuller use of the powers entrusted to him under the Charter. In this context, we propose that consideration be given to the feasibility of the General Assembly authorizing the Secretary-General to request advisory opinions from the International Court of Justice, provided that the disputes concerned are ones in which the Secretary-General has been asked to intervene or has been assigned a role and the States parties agree to make such a request.

12. In view of the growing role of the Security Council in discharging its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, conferred on it by the States Members of the Organization as a whole, it is increasingly important that the Council's work should reflect a clear awareness of the fact that "in carrying out its duties under this responsibility the Security Council acts on their behalf".

13. In this connection, while we recognize the value of informal consultations and more frequent use of such consultations, we emphasize the value of maintaining transparency in the Council's deliberative and decision-making processes, and of applying to such consultations the terms of Article 31 of the Charter concerning States which are not members of the Security Council with respect to questions affecting their interests.

14. Also in that connection, we stress the important role that could be played by the reports of the Security Council to the General Assembly provided for in Articles 15 and 24 of the Charter. In that regard, we stress the trend towards greater participation in the debates on the Council's annual report held in the General Assembly; this would be stimulated by greater inclusion of substantive questions in such debates. Moreover, we suggest that it would be appropriate for the special reports provided for by the Charter to be prepared also on substantive questions.

15. With regard to the consequences of some Council decisions for third States, it remains a matter of concern to us that there is no machinery guaranteeing an adequate response to requests for assistance under Article 50 of the Charter. We believe that such machinery should be set up in order to compensate for secondary effects on third States of sanctions imposed under Chapter VII of the Charter.

16. The Organization's capacity with regard to activities to establish peace can be strengthened if prompter action is taken when there are signs that a conflict is developing or there is a clear trend towards aggravation of a conflict. The General Assembly, the Security Council and the Secretary-General have powers enabling them to take measures not involving the use of force and designed to limit the extent of a dispute and bring about a solution to it.

17. Every effort must be made to promote a diplomatic solution to disputes. The measures set forth in Chapter VI of the Charter must be exhausted before other action is taken.

18. In the context of the current increase in preventive diplomacy and in peacemaking and peace-keeping activities, there is no question as to the role that regional organizations can play. Often, the signs can be read more easily and a complete understanding of the causes of some regional conflicts, as well as diplomatic activities to forestall regional conflicts, achieved more effectively at the regional level.

19. The current international situation both permits and requires increased periodic coordination, cooperation and consultation between the United Nations and regional organizations. Such cooperation and coordination should be practised in accordance with the organizations' statutes and the relevant Articles of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, bearing in mind the primary responsibility of the United Nations for peace-keeping. This process of cooperation and consultation should also involve such groups of States and permanent consultation and coordination bodies as may be considered representative even though they are not included among the regional organizations provided for under Chapter VIII.

20. In the specific case of the Organization of American States, we support the establishment of mechanisms for consultation and cooperation between the two organizations. We also note that, in conformity with past statements and with reference to the Declaration adopted by the Security Council at its summit meeting, the Chairman of the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States has expressed the Organization's readiness to cooperate with the United Nations in its efforts to improve collective means for the prevention and solution of international conflicts.

21. The United Nations must have sufficient financial capacity to carry out its peace-keeping function, given that the resources dedicated to that function will always be incomparably less expensive than the costs of wars. Recognizing that the financing of operations in this context constitutes a collective but not an equally shared responsibility of States Members of the United Nations, we recall the special responsibility in this connection of the permanent members of the Security Council, in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 1874 (S-IV) of 27 June 1963, as well as the competence of the General Assembly with respect to the budgetary aspect of such operations.

22. Considerations of political and economic realism make the current financing system the only viable mechanism. It is therefore necessary to make the system predictable and stable by adopting permanently the current system of contributions for the financing of peace-keeping operations established under General Assembly resolution 3101 (XXVIII) and subsequent resolutions.

23. In order that the United Nations may have the necessary resources available in a timely manner during the initial phase of peace-keeping operations, consideration should be given to proposals designed to achieve such objectives, such as the establishment of a peace-keeping reserve fund and a study of modalities for the collection of voluntary contributions, with the proviso that any alternative financing mechanism must preserve the autonomy and independent judgement of the United Nations.

24. To the extent that it contributes to greater effectiveness in peace-keeping operations, emphasis should be placed on the search for alternative sources of supplies by increasing the participation of developing countries in the provision of materials and equipment for such operations.

25. In respect of issues relating to the comprehensive review of the whole question of peace-keeping operations in all their aspects, and in the context of the analysis necessary to ensure that such operations are made more effective and efficient, we believe that the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations can continue to perform particularly important work.